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Latrobe, John H. B.

Manual labour school

Baltimore

1840

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MANUAL LABOUR SCHOOL.

ADDRESS

ON THE

SUBJECT OF A MANUAL LABOUR SCHOOL.

BY

JOHN H. B. LATROBE, Esq.

AND AN

ADDRESS TO THE CITIZENS OF BALTIMORE,

308

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Box 734

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN D. TOY,
Corner of Market and St. Paul streets.

1840

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On the 16th December, 1839, a meeting of gentlemen desirous to establish, if possible, a manual labour school in the vicinity of Baltimore, was held in the first Baptist Church, at the corner of Sharp and Lombard streets.

On motion of Mr. George W. Norris, Dr. Dunbar was called to the chair, and John L. Carey Esq. appointed secretary.

Mr. Whiston, superintendent of the Boston Farm School was present, and at the request of the meeting made a full and very interesting statement in regard to the establishment, history and results of the institution under his charge. The meeting was also addressed by C. Gilman, Esq. when, on motion of Dr. Thomas E. Bond, Jr. a committee was appointed to take the subject into consideration, with instructions to call a meeting of the citizens, whenever they were prepared to report, and generally to pursue such course as they might deem best calculated to bring the matter fairly and favourably before the public.

The following named gentlemen constituted the committee:

GEORGE W. NORRIS,	JOHN L. CAREY,
SAMUEL G. WYMAN,	F. A. LEVERING,
WILLIAM H. BEATTY,	JOHN KETTLEWELL,
THOMAS E. BOND, JR.	J. R. W. DUNBAR,
GEORGE S. NORRIS,	H. MAGRUDER,
CHARLES GILMAN,	J. T. HANDY.
WILLIAM P. STEWART,	

The meeting then adjourned.

JOHN L. CAREY, Sec'y.

BALTIMORE, March 17th, 1840.

At a public meeting convened in the Methodist Protestant Church, in Liberty street, for the purpose of considering the propriety, and devising the means of establishing a manual labour school, also to hear a report on the subject, from a committee of thirteen gentlemen appointed for this purpose in December last, at a meeting held in the Baptist Church, in Sharp street; Judge Magruder was called to the chair, Joseph King, Jr. Richard Norris, William Crane, Samuel D. Walker, William F. Murdoch, J. Harman Brown, and George Stonebraker, Esqs. were appointed vice-presidents, and Richard Lemmon secretary. After prayer by the Rev. Mr. Lipscomb, and the proceedings of the meeting held in the Baptist Church having been read, Charles Gilman, Esq. presented and read the report of the thirteen gentlemen appointed at that meeting; which, upon motion of George W. Norris, Esq. seconded by John H. B. Latrobe, Esq.* and was unanimously adopted, together with the following resolutions, reported by the committee of thirteen.

*In seconding this resolution Mr. Latrobe delivered the address which follows, and which, at the request of a committee appointed to procure its publication, he furnished for the purpose.

Resolved, That it is expedient to establish in the neighbourhood of Baltimore, a manual labour school for indigent boys; that the public good requires it, and that philanthropy and the improvements of the age demand it.

Resolved, That in aid of this meritorious cause, cards be distributed amongst this audience for donations and subscriptions, and also, that a committee of six from each ward in this city be appointed by the president, respectfully to solicit from the citizens such aid as they may think proper to afford to the contemplated institution.

On motion it was *Resolved*, That the appointments devolved by the last resolution on the president, be made at his future leisure.

After which the meeting adjourned.

RICHARD LEMMON, Sec'y.

DEAR SIR:

BALTIMORE, *March 19th*, 1840.

At a meeting of those favourable to the establishment of a manual labour school for indigent boys, held on Tuesday evening last, after the delivery of your address it was unanimously *Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to return the thanks of the meeting to John H. B. Latrobe, Esq. for his truly excellent and eloquent address, and to request that a copy be placed in the hands of the committee for publication.

The undersigned were appointed a committee to carry out the above resolution. We, therefore, as the representatives of the meeting, respectfully request that you will permit the publication of the address which we feel assured cannot fail to excite a deep interest in the community in reference to one of the most important efforts that has been made in the cause of humanity in this city for years.

We are, sir, with great respect, your obedient servants,

JOHN R. W. DUNBAR,
THOS. E. BOND, JR.
WM. P. STEWART.

TO JOHN H. B. LATROBE, Esq.

GENTLEMEN:

BALTIMORE, *March 20th*, 1840.

Enclosed is the address delivered by me on Tuesday last, a copy of which you have requested for publication. Begging you to accept my acknowledgments for the kind terms in which you are pleased to speak of it. I have the honour to be, yours, very respectfully,

JOHN H. B. LATROBE.

TO MESSRS. J. R. W. DUNBAR,
THOS. E. BOND, JR.
WM. P. STEWART.

ADDRESS.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I appear before you this evening as the advocate of a manual labour school for indigent boys, which it is proposed to establish in the vicinity of Baltimore.

The name alone would sufficiently explain the object of the institution, which, however, is most clearly and satisfactorily stated in the report that we have just heard read; and in the remarks that I have to make little more will be necessary than to comment upon and enforce the principles and views that the report suggests.

The manual labour school then, may be defined to be an institution for the education of those boys, belonging to the city, whose extraordinary exposure to moral evil requires peculiar provision to be made for forming their character, and promoting and securing the happiness of their lives; which is proposed to be effected by separating them from vicious associations, placing them under the care of proper instructors, and employing them in labour, as their strength and years permit, not only for the purpose of teaching them to obtain their future livelihood, but also as a means of making them contribute to their own present support.

The class of boys for whom the manual labour school is intended is a numerous one, and forms a distinct portion of the population of all large communities. It has its peculiar and strongly marked characteristics, the most prominent of which is recklessness. It ranks among its members the half-grown, half-fed, half-clothed, hard-worked children of the very indigent, as well as the apparently purposeless idlers, who seek in winter the most sheltered spots, to bask where the sun shines warmest, and who lounge through the long days of summer about the suburbs, where the trees spread the coolest shadows. It is a class which has its oracles and its leaders, who want

not for energy or talent, and who exhibit their first promise of future power for good or evil, in directing and controlling with despotic authority the pranks and mischief of their boyish associates. Accustomed, as this class is from infancy, to all the shifts of poverty, made useful as soon as they can walk, their intellects become sharpened to a degree unnatural to their years, and they learn to comprehend the business and the feelings of men, before they have passed the first periods of childhood. Unfortunately too, the knowledge thus acquired is imbibed in a foul and unwholesome moral atmosphere, and it is with the vices, not the virtues of more advanced years, that the class of children, of which I am speaking, become thus prematurely familiar. The master spirits of this class, whose will sways the less resolute and gives its laws to the young community, are easily distinguished. If you watch them you will seldom find them engaged in games of mere amusement. Tops and marbles they sometimes patronize when the play is not, in boyish dialect, 'for fun,' but 'for good;' because the winnings may be disposed of for the money, whose value and whose uses they are already well acquainted with: but hoops and kites, hide-and-seek, and bandy, they generally eschew, for these require exertion, and they are profligate. Their favourite amusements are pitch-and-toss, and the penny sweat-cloth, and the low gambling which is to be found in the precincts of the race-course, and in the yards of tipping-houses. They aim much at what they esteem a knowing carriage; and we have often seen a fine, bright-eyed, intelligent little fellow belonging to this class, with his cap set jauntily on one side of his head, his arms akimbo, his hands in his pockets, his feet apart, and, with a cigar in his mouth, bandying oaths and obscene jests with full-grown men, as though their equal in years and vice. If a quarrel takes place among their young associates, they form the ring, they place the chip on the shoulder, they encourage the timid combatant, and act as arbiters of the battle. If there is a tumult of any kind in the street, they swarm like bees around the spot, coming from we know not where, as though some bond of union existed among them, which vibrated throughout the Ishmaelite fraternity to all sounds of violence and misrule. If a fire takes place, there is always one or more of them certain to be in the vicinity; and their wild and elfish shrieks are echoed by the whole tribe throughout the streets until the entire city is alarmed. They seize the ropes of the engines, they crowd around the flames, they dare danger with the boldness of older spirits, and when the fire is extinguished they are to be seen prowling among the blackened ruins, turning over the smouldering

fragments of beams and rafters and seeking among them for the spoils that the conflagration may have spared. They jostle and fight, too, for their plunder, like the foul birds whose feasts are made of the leavings of decay and death. And when the demon spirit of the mob is roused, these boys form the nucleus upon which gather all the malignant elements of incendiary violence; theirs is the loudest shout; their hands are the first to hurl the missile and apply the firebrand; and nameless and irresponsible, but numerous and bold, they often succeed in giving to the suggestions of a few discontented spirits the character of a general outbreak, which, though subversive of the laws, is made by the means I have described to appear to have the sanction of the people.

As already remarked this class wants not for talent and energy: and there is a certain rude code of honour and half formed feeling of justice, which are to be found in it. The individuals of which it is composed are born with the same aptitude for what is good and great that is enjoyed by the children of richer parents; and it is only by degrees that their disposition becomes perverted and the better sentiments of their nature are overcome. It is to employ this talent usefully, to direct this energy aright, to give their full development to all good and honourable impulses, that the manual labour school has been devised. It is for the class, Mr. Chairman, that I have been describing, that our sympathies are now invoked. It is to diminish its numbers, if not to change its destiny, that our aid is now solicited. When the unceasing current of the Mississippi threatens to undermine a portion of the forest-covered bank, throwing thereby into the stream the trees, whose roots, taking fast hold of the bottom, convert the trunk, shorn of its branches, into the snag and sawyer, the watcher of the waters removes in time from the edge of the river the ash and the cotton wood, so that the shore, when it falls, adds little to the current, save some harmless alluvion to be borne to the distant gulf. In like manner would the institution I advocate anticipate the action of the restless stream of human existence, removing those whom circumstances have especially subjected to its undermining influences; and, while saving them from moral destruction, prevent, at the same time, their becoming the means of destroying others who float unsuspectingly upon the waters.

My object, Mr. Chairman, is to create an interest, if possible, in behalf of the class of persons I have been describing. I have already attempted to sketch the appearance of one of them as the representative of the whole. Let us now follow this individual a little further. We take him up the leader of a few youthful adherents, of less active

and commanding temper. Thus far he has committed no crime against the law. He has been foolish, reckless and inconsiderate: but he is, as yet, in peace with society. But, with thoughts and feelings in advance of his years, he almost necessarily seeks the association of men, and from being the hero of a street corner, and the leader of a gang of mischievous boys, he becomes the listener to tales of desperate daring and hair-breadth escapes; and, after a while, from being a listener to deeds of violence, we find him a participator in their execution. At this time his entire appearance changes. He avoids the broad day-light. His brow becomes habitually contracted, and his cap is pulled over it, as though to conceal the alteration; the expression of his features changes; he shuns the gaze of those with whom he is conversing, and his eye is at all times watchful, restless and uneasy: he no longer laughs aloud with the frank merry voice of childhood; his smiles have become sneers; his whole person has a haggard look, and the characteristic of recklessness, to which I have adverted, is changed into the most absorbing selfishness. Beginning with petty offences and escaping detection, impunity makes him bold, and the successful pilferer bids fair to become the unflinching house-breaker. The result, sooner or later, is the same: he is arrested for the commission of some offence, petty, perhaps, in itself, but nevertheless punishable by the laws; and after a confinement in the common gaol, in contact with depraved felons, he is placed at the bar and arraigned before a court of justice. Every eye is turned towards him. The voice of the clerk is heard to pronounce his name and describe his offence, with all the accuracy of technical form, so distinctly that no one can mistake the identity or the charge. The identity is fixed in many a memory; and the insignificance and exemption from observation that poverty and want had before procured for him are lost forever. Thenceforward the mark of the brand is upon his brow; and the probability is that his future life will exhibit a career of sin varied only by the periods of imprisonment.

It is stated in a report to the senate of New York, made in 1826, 'that one person, who was confined in the prison at Auburn, was first committed when he was only ten years old, and had since at different times been twenty-eight years a convict, at an expense to the state of not less than two thousand dollars.'

Here then is an apt illustration of what is but too frequently the career of the class that I have been describing; and instead of supposing the progress in crime of an imaginary individual, I might have referred at once to the prisoner at Auburn as a living example

fully answering my purpose. Who was he? The book from which I quote mentions not his name. What was his origin—what his ultimate fate? We are informed of neither. And yet curiosity would fain penetrate the obscurity of his history, and learn the details of the existence of one who was in prison when ten years old, and was twenty-eight years a prisoner. Perhaps he had been an orphan, dependent upon the scanty charity of relations to whom poverty made him a heavy burden. Perhaps he had been the child of a widow, whose hard and ill-requited toil, when exerted to the utmost limit of physical endurance, barely afforded the food to support life, and left no time, yielded no means, for the care and education of her son. Perhaps, with both his parents living, the profligacy and intemperance of the father, while it deprived his family of his proper care, exposed his offspring from their very cradle to the contaminating influence of vicious example: or perhaps mere carelessness and indifference on the part of his natural protectors left the child of ten years old to pursue unrestrained that course of vagrancy which had made the penitentiary his familiar home. But whatever his origin, whatever the immediate causes of his first commitment, one thing is almost certain, that he must originally have been the victim of circumstances over which, at his tender age, he could have had no control; and that it was his misfortune, rather than his fault, which, at ten years old, turned him into the path that he subsequently pursued to so melancholy a purpose.

This case, it is believed, is but one among hundreds occurring annually throughout our country, though it is to be hoped not to the same extent. In a report of the house of refuge for juvenile delinquents, in New York, published in 1829, it is stated, that three hundred and thirty-seven boys had been committed in one year for offences against the laws; and that the whole number who had been in the institution, in four years, had been four hundred and fifty-three: and in the report of the Prison Discipline Society for 1827, it is stated that there were, in five different prisons, three hundred boys confined in contact with felons of every grade, receiving from them an education in crime fitting them in all respects to run the career, and with the same results, of the prisoner at Auburn. In the house of refuge, in Boston, there were one hundred and forty-three commitments in 1827-28—one hundred and thirty-eight from the police court and five from the municipal court, forty of whom were of the age of ten years and under, there being one of the age of six years, and six of the age of seven years only; and there being in the whole number but eight over the age of fifteen.

Are not these statements sufficient to satisfy us that it is no matter of merely imaginary inconvenience for which our sympathies are invoked, but one in which we have a deep interest as members of the community: and are not all of us, whose circumstances have been more fortunate, and who have had our infancy watched with affection and care, called upon by the strongest possible considerations to aid in rescuing from destruction the class to which I have been referring.

It may, perhaps, occur to some, that the charities of society have already been exerted in this behalf, and to a sufficient extent; and that the infant school, the Sunday school, the orphan asylum, the common free schools, all tend to diminish the evils complained of, and will ultimately cause them to disappear altogether. Such, however, is far from being the case. That all of the institutions which have been mentioned are most praiseworthy and valuable, and that, incidentally, they may ameliorate the class of which I am speaking, there can be no doubt. But they do so only incidentally. Their immediate object is not the same with that proposed by the manual labour school; and even if it were the same, the means employed are insufficient to accomplish it.

The infant school is intended to provide a place at which the infant children of the labouring poor may be safely kept, while their parents are engaged during the day in out-of-door toil, or when their avocations at home do not permit their looking after them; and the class of children received includes the infant that can scarcely talk, and both sexes.

The Sunday school exercises its direct influence but one day out of the seven, and although I am inclined to believe that, in the aggregate, it has done as much good as any human institution, and I consider the founder of the system as the benefactor of his race, yet it wants that uninterrupted influence which is essential for the accomplishment of the object more particularly in view.

The orphan asylums are generally devoted to the care of females, at least in this country; and the free schools require, commonly, a decency of apparel which, cost little as it may, is still in most cases too expensive to be within the reach of the children for whose benefit the manual labour school is principally intended. Besides, the free schools are designed rather for the literary than the moral education of the scholars; and in the intervals of study, in the hours of play, the children are left without the constant supervision which is essential to the eradication of bad habits, if already existing, or to prevent their being acquired.

It must be apparent then, that the field for benevolent action for which the manual labour school is intended has not yet been occupied, that it is a most interesting one, and that the means proposed for improving it are worthy of favourable consideration and support.

To carry out the design of a manual labour school, it is proposed to purchase a farm in the vicinity of Baltimore, of sufficient size and in a healthy neighbourhood, and to erect upon it buildings suitable for the accommodation of the scholars, containing proper dormitories, eating rooms, school rooms and offices; the whole to be under the immediate charge of a superintendent of fitting temper and knowledge, who will, in his turn, be controlled by a Board of Managers in the city, to whom all applications for admission will be made, and who will have the general direction of the institution. Here the scholars, in the intervals of what are termed ordinarily school hours, though in fact they will at all times be under a course of instruction, will be required to perform such labour on the farm as may be suited to their years and strength, or at such trades as may be taught in the establishment, so that, at the expiration of their scholarship, they will be fitted to engage either in agricultural or mechanical pursuits, with the information necessary to enable them to win their way in the world and gain an honest livelihood. The object being to combine moral and intellectual culture with regular labour, it is almost unnecessary to add, that, while every effort will be made to prevent the institution from assuming a sectarian character, every attention will be paid to the religious education of the scholars. Thus, while the scholars will be educated at the expense of the public, they will be able to pay back a portion of the expense by their work, finding again, in their very toil, an ample compensation in the habits of industry and in the knowledge that they will derive from it. The convict in the penitentiary labours to support the institution that punishes him, as the agent of the law, and succeeds in doing so: with how much more zest, with what grateful feelings, should not the pupil of the manual labour school toil, not only to provide for his own support, but to perpetuate the blessings of an institution which has rescued him from the temptations of vice, and made him a useful member of society, ere yet he has become an offender against its laws.

For some years past there has been a manual labour school in operation in the vicinity of Boston, the happy example of which has led to the present undertaking in the neighbourhood of our city. This school was opened in 1835, on an island in Boston harbour, containing about one hundred and twenty acres. The average number of pupils, in 1838, was one hundred and five, fifty-nine of whom

were between the ages of eight and thirteen, and the remainder between thirteen and eighteen. The whole number that had been received in three years was one hundred and fifty-five, thirty of whom had been bound out to farmers and mechanics, whose accounts of their conduct and industry had been highly satisfactory. Most of the labour required for the support of the establishment was done by the scholars;—as for instance, all the tailoring and shoe-making was done by them, with the assistance of a master-workman to cut out. The produce of the farm had amounted to forty-five hundred dollars in one year, almost the whole of which was produced by the labour of the boys. Three thousand dollars worth of this was consumed on the premises, and the rest sold. The applications for admission into the school were far more numerous than could be gratified; and, in many instances, parents had offered to pay, that their children might be admitted to participate in the benefit of the institution. In fine, all the anticipations of the founders of the school had been more than realized; and it was anticipated, that in a few years it would be able to support itself without aid from the public in the way of annual contributions.

The plan, therefore, that is now suggested, is not a new one. It does not present itself as an experiment of doubtful results. It is a well tested scheme for saving from degradation and crime a large class of unfortunate beings, who, careless, because ignorant, of the perils of their situation, are hastening with rapid steps to inevitable destruction. We may have little sympathy for grown men, who sin against knowledge, whose crimes are the results of deliberation, or the consequences of ill-restrained passions. But when we see little children,—boys of tender years,—without natural protectors, or abandoned by them,—or when not abandoned, exposed, as a consequence of the very relation of parent and child, to the influence of the worst examples,—in cases like these, there is certainly the strongest appeal made to the best feelings of our nature; and in contributing to ameliorate their condition, we are but paying, I repeat, the debt that our own more fortunate lot has imposed upon every one of us.

Among the most useful institutions of a comparatively late date is the house of refuge for juvenile delinquents, where youthful offenders against the laws are punished by confinement and labour, accompanied by moral and religious instruction. The house of refuge has accomplished the great desideratum of separating the child in vice from the deep-dyed criminal of mature years, and has abated 'the enormous evil of juvenile punishment without reformation.' Formerly the prison-house was, to the youthful delinquent, the uni-

versity of sin, where he received all the degrees of depravity, after he had prowled through his preliminary education in wickedness in the schools afforded by the streets, and their associations, of a large community. Punishment, then, instead of amending its object, gave him a more eager desire for the deeds that merited it, and a readier skill in evading it. The house of refuge changes all this, wherever it is established, and no large city should be without it. Still, however, it is a penitentiary. No one enters it who has not offended against the laws: no one leaves it without feeling that his having been there may be cast up to him at some future period, when a life of industry and good conduct shall have made the reproach ungenerous and unjust. The object of the institution of which I am the advocate is to anticipate the commission of crime. The house of refuge is intended to punish it, after it is committed. Against the success of the scholar of the manual labour school in after life, there is nothing with which the memory of the past can interfere. The poverty which placed him in it, instead of being a reproach, is remembered with honest pride, when he reflects in his prosperity, that he has been the architect of his own fortunes. But the inmate of the house of refuge, let his after fate be what it may, is haunted by a busy conscience reminding him that he has been a criminal.

These remarks are not made, of course, with any view to depreciate an institution which is in every respect so valuable as the house of refuge; but for the purpose of drawing a clear line of distinction between it and the manual labour school, so as to prevent the plan which aims at the prevention of crime among the young, from being confounded with one that has been adopted for its punishment. This, I trust, has been sufficiently done; and I hope, likewise, that I have been able so to distinguish the manual labour school from other and somewhat similar institutions, as to place it in a position to secure for it approbation and support. Should it succeed through our aid, a great good will have been accomplished. That it will succeed, I cannot for a moment persuade myself to doubt. All that is necessary is to establish it, even on the smallest scale, when it will be found to contain within itself the elements of its increase and prosperity. To us, remotely, may the future statesman owe his power and influence. To us, may the mechanic of a later day be indebted for the knowledge, whose results shall be yet undreamed-of additions to human comfort and convenience. To us, may science render thanks for contributions to her stores surpassing the hitherto accumulated treasures of centuries of painful toil. By us, may the fomenters of broils and discord, the

contemners of all that is good and great and beautiful, the assassin, the burglar and the thief, be turned from the evil of their ways, and come to be looked upon as the friends and benefactors of their kind.

To mere mortal vision, accident often appears to determine the destinies of existence: and to illustrate this idea was invented the fable of the drop of water, which, falling from the clouds into the vast expanse of the Indian ocean, was supposed to have moralized upon the annihilation of its identity that would follow its absorption into that world of waters. But the humble and tiny drop, so runs the fable, turned by a zephyr from its course, fell, by accident, into the mouth of a pearl oyster, and formed in the animal the nucleus of that glorious gem, which, plucked by the diver from the deep, became in time the proudest ornament that shone in the Byzantine diadem. And so it is with the countless throng of children, that year after year are to be found in all large communities. Their fate may be equally the result of accident. A kind word,—a look of approbation even,—though the word is forgotten, and the momentary glance may have faded from the memory, have been the causes to which may be traced the usefulness, happiness and prosperity of a life that otherwise might have been passed in sin and crime, and at last have been absorbed into the ocean of eternity without leaving a sign by which its identity might be recognized. That we should wilfully leave that to accident, which effort on our part might render certain, is surely a reproach to an age which boasts the knowledge, the opportunities and the means of the present; and to do their duty in this respect, to direct the drop of water aright, as it falls into the ocean of society, so that the moral agent of which it is the type may become 'a pearl of great price,' is the object of all those institutions, which, like the infant school, the Sunday school, the free school, and, most especially, the institution that is now commended to your favour, address themselves to the improvement of those who, deprived in their tender years of the advantages of fortune and position in society, are helpless to direct their own course, and are dependent upon the aid they may receive from the more favoured of their fellow beings.

Among the mountains of Vermont, on the thoroughfare of travel between Burlington and Windsor, and high above the level of the distant sea, there swells up a quiet fountain of pure and wholesome water, which spreads out into a spot of moist and verdant ground near to the road side. From this spot, the declivity of the hill slopes gently to the east and west; and the waters of the fountain, as accident may determine, divide and take opposite courses. The

portion that flows to the east, gaining strength as it goes, passes through a fair and fertile country, until it reaches the calm Connecticut, which bears it to the broad and sunny sound, that, in its turn, conveys it to the ocean, past the busy and crowded port of the chief city of our land, where the tall spire of the christian temple points upwards to the heavens, and where each returning Sabbath is marked by the observances of a christian people. The portion of the waters of the fountain, that accident has turned westward, also passes in its way scenes of smiling fertility; but the greater part of its course is through a bleak and inhospitable region, and when it reaches the sea, it is in the world of the ice-berg, where the wild fowl are the sole inhabitants of the iron-bound shores, whose shrill discordant cries, as they whirl round their barren homes, are the only moan that is made for the wintry shipwrecks and death of which they are the witnesses. The destinies of the waters of this fountain may, without much stretch of the imagination, be compared to the destinies of the class of our community, which has, on this occasion, been especially the object of my remarks. It is not worth the while, or else all the waters of the fountain might, at small cost and slight trouble, be turned into the brighter channel. A trifling barrier, a few shovel-fulls of earth, would accomplish the purpose; and however the cold and angry ocean, at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, might be supplied from other sources, still, each of the drops of this particular fountain might be made to sparkle under a sunny sky. But can we say this trouble is not necessary in the case of those for whom I have used the fountain as a representative. Compared with the results to be produced, the labour is as small, the cost as immaterial, in the one case as in the other: but in the one case, the question is only as regards the fate of a few drops of water, which the sun at last evaporates, but to restore, in some different spot, to the earth from which it came; in the other case, the question is as regards that eternal essence, which when freed from its 'mortal admixture of earth's mould,' passes forever from its house of clay to one 'not made by hands, eternal in the heavens.'

TO THE CITIZENS OF BALTIMORE.

WE live in an age which has been most appropriately called the age of benevolence. At no previous period in the history of man, has there been a more abundant manifestation of the spirit of good will, and active exertion to improve the moral and physical condition of the human race. But while this exists in a great degree throughout our country, it is most remarkably evident at the present time in this community. The most careless observer cannot fail to have noticed that this city has been, for the last few months, under a most remarkable influence, which has stirred up the whole mass of society to its very foundation. This effect has not proceeded from the disposition to enterprize, or political influence, which exert so great control over the public mind in this country, but is the result we truly believe of the spirit of peace and good will to mankind: the outpouring of the influence from on high, and its mighty power over the hearts and actions of men.

The effect on society has been most astonishing in arousing a general desire to do good. The benevolent institutions of the city have received a new impulse; but not contented with those formerly established, active benevolence seeks to gratify its noble ambition in enterprizes as yet unknown in this community. One of the objects which has engaged the attention, is that for which we now solicit the careful examination of the public, feeling well assured that its objects are so noble and important that all must approve and aid the effort.

A few gentlemen of this city, believing that the condition of the indigent boys called loudly for the care of the public, conceived the plan of establishing a farm-school, or asylum for such persons. They believed that no one could pass along the street without noticing assemblages of boys who are trained up in the way they should *not* go, and who when they become old will not depart from it. The evil was apparent, and the need of a remedy just as evident. The experience of other places were appealed to, and the present effort is the result.

The plan contemplated is to obtain a suitable farm in the neighbourhood, where the boys can be far enough removed to be out of

the influence of the city. That they shall be supported, educated, and trained up in the habits of industry, so as to make them useful citizens. The general plan may be more correctly estimated from the following extract from a law just passed the general assembly of Maryland. Vide secs. 5th and 6th.

'SEC. 5. And be it enacted, That the board of directors, of whom five shall be a quorum, for the transaction of business, for the time being, shall have the entire control and the direction of the concerns of the corporation, shall have the appointment of all the subordinate officers of the institution, and shall have the management of all the donations, subscription, funds, and the state thereof, to be managed and appropriated for relieving, instructing, and supporting indigent boys; (and the said corporation shall have power to admit in their institution any indigent boy of the city of Baltimore or its vicinity above the age of five years, at the request or permission of his parent or guardian, and to accept from his father, or in case his father be not living, from his mother or guardian, a surrender in writing, of any such boy to the care and direction of said corporation, and they may take into their institution any other indigent boys residing in the city of Baltimore, who have no parent or guardian within the state, and all boys so admitted shall be maintained and employed in said institution, and shall be instructed in moral and religious duties, and the learning usually taught in common English schools, and each boy so admitted into said institution, so soon as he shall be able to read, shall be furnished with a copy of the Holy Scriptures in the English language, and each and every such boy shall have the privilege of reading said Scriptures at all suitable times; and when of suitable age, they shall be employed in a regular course of labour, and be instructed in agriculture or such other useful occupation, so that they may be prepared to earn their own livelihood.

'SEC. 6. And be it enacted, That the said corporation shall have power and authority to retain, and employ such boys on their farm after they are of a suitable age to be bound, and until the age of twenty-one years, or they may bind out such boys, when of suitable age in virtuous families, or as apprentices to any regular trade or reputable occupation until the age of twenty-one years, any thing in any law of this state to the contrary notwithstanding; provided, that any such boy who shall not have been surrendered to said corporation in the manner herein provided may be withdrawn from the institution or the person to whom he is bound, by his parent or guardian, upon payment to said corporation of the expenses incurred by them in the relief, support and instruction of such boys; and

provided further, that nothing in this act contained, shall prevent the said board of directors from dismissing any boy from the institution, whenever they think the welfare of the institution will be promoted thereby.'

From these extracts a correct idea may be formed of the plan and objects of the proposed institution. The question now comes before all who desire to be guided by the dictates of duty.

Will this institution be of advantage to the public good, and in what way? It is believed unnecessary to occupy much time in setting forth the great benefits which have attended such institutions in other cities, and which must attend it in our own. A few thoughts will be submitted for the calm consideration of reflecting men.

It was the reply of an American sage, when taunted with the question, 'what is the value of a child?' 'It may become a man.' Who, that in walking along the streets, can fail to notice the great number of boys who are forming habits which eventually lead to crime. The great enemy of the race is busily employed in sowing the tares in the virgin soil, and while he 'sows the wind society will indeed reap the whirlwind.'

These young beings are ignorant of the inevitable tendency of their course; they are like lambs led to the slaughter, and shall society while standing upon the high ground of observation, and knows well that these habits lead to poverty and disgrace, fold its arms and let them rush to the dark abyss of moral, and often temporal death, without raising a warning voice, without making an effort to rescue them from ruin. If we should act so unkindly, will not their blood be upon our heads, will it not cry for vengeance to the Great Parent of the universe? Will he not demand at our hands where is our brother? How noble and imperishable are the results contemplated by this institution. To rescue young immortals from the downward path to ruin. To clothe, to feed, to educate, to prepare for a respectable and honourable station in society. To raise up perhaps, the future statesmen and legislators of the country, philanthropists and respectable fathers of families; more than all, to train a soul for its high birthright in eternity.

We believe that every man who loves his species, must open his heart and cheerfully contribute of his abundance as God has given him, to the support of such noble institutions. But unfortunately, we have often to address a different class of persons, who feeling hedged in by prosperity, become callous to the dangers and the trials of their fellow-creatures, who say our children can be educated, clothed, fed and fare sumptuously every day; there is no danger of their

falling victims to vice and want, therefore, what possible interest can we have in such an institution; let every man take care of his own children; charity begins at home. Not so; God for the wisest purposes has bound the whole human race by the great chain of mutual interest and common good.

Mankind are but beginning to awake to their true interests, and to see 'as through a glass darkly' the great and mighty truth, that whatever affects the general welfare, must influence individual happiness.

The great law which God gave to unite society, is the principle of love, which is as mighty in the moral world as the law which regulates the planetary system, is in the physical.

We believe that proper consideration of the subject will prove that all the misery, the ruin, the bloodshed, the contentions, and the sorrows of the human race, from the first transgression by Cain in slaying righteous Abel, up to the present moment, has arisen from breaking this law. Let it then be assumed as a truth, that whatever promotes the good of others must be promotive of our own. But lest this may be considered too sublimated a mode of reasoning, let us bring the argument to a closer application to the actual state of things, the every day occurrences of human life. Let us regard the considerations of safety of life and property. Whence originates all the horrid crimes which alarm and shock society? whence is the host that fill the prisons recruited? who lights the incendiary torch, or swell the awful shout of the infuriated mob? A close observer of society has told us that this class, who will form the objects of the proposed institution, are the principal source of these enemies of the community; that the immense river, black with crime and death, which rolls on its desolating current, is made up and swelled to its size by the little clear and pure rivulets which trickles from these fountains.

But let us come nearer and touch the very heart-strings of the parent who still closes his ears against the appeals we are now making. You love your children as your very heart's blood, you would shrink back with horror from their approach to a fellow-creature infected with a contagious disease, you warn them against the rabid animal, the poisonous serpent, or the deadly tiger; and yet you are blind and careless, to the danger of their coming in contact with those infected with moral disease, destructive of the soul, and far more to be dreaded than the serpent or the tiger. In the present condition of society how is it to be avoided. Are not the young drawn forcibly to each other by the strong principle of sympathy which beats in their hearts, yet unchilled by the knowledge of the selfishness of the world? Do they not seek each other's society,

and are they not very often led to imitate those practices they see in others, and exposed to great danger, while the moral principle is as yet weak, and when the care of the parent is absent from them, which is at that tender age the substitute for the restraining principle. At every corner of the street, at every lane or alley will be found those, who, young in age but old in sin, are the willing teachers of others. It is true that this is a selfish argument, but it is one of resistless force to every parent who feels proper anxiety for the moral welfare of his child.

That this is a most important subject, that some remedy is needed is admitted by the universal voice of the community. The time has now come for every good citizen, every parent and every christian to unite their energies to the accomplishment of so noble an undertaking. The signs are most encouraging, the press has for months raised its mighty voice in its favour, the reverend clergy, the venerable fathers of the city, the men of wealth and philanthropy, all unite in recommending it. And it requires but united effort to give the institution complete and permanent success.

**END OF
TITLE**